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Dear Public Health,

I am writing as a voter and taxpayer to ask you to oppose SB 290, and I strongly urge you to remove vapor products and smokeless tobacco from this legislation. Including low-risk, smoke-free products like e-cigarettes/vapor products, which are estimated to be 99% less hazardous than smoking, in this legislation is bad public policy.

Should this bill become law, adult 18 - 20 year old smokers will not only be prevented from legally purchasing cigarettes, but will also be denied access to low-risk vapor products that have helped many smokers finally become smoke-free. Forcing these young adults to rely on expensive, ineffective nicotine replacement products that have an established failure rate of 93 - 97% is not a fair choice. Simply enacting a sudden ban on sales of ALL tobacco and vapor products to some adults that have likely been smoking since they were teenagers is not a humane solution.

Denying access to these potentially life-saving products to persons between the ages of 18 and 21 is a solution in search of a problem. The "problem" of youth access to smoke-free tobacco products and e-cigarettes has been routinely overstated. Frequently, the justification for making vapor products less accessible to minors is a ginned-up fear that these products may act as a gateway to smoking. However, the CDC's own National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS) shows this is a baseless assumption -- youth smoking rates continue to decline to record lows (<http://rodutobaccotruth.blogspot.com/2015/10/the-cdc-buries-lead-teen-e-cigarette.html>). Certainly, no one is advocating that kids should have unbridled access to nicotine products, but it is apparent that making e-cigarettes less available to adults will potentially undo the recent record declines in smoking.

It is disappointing to see proposals such as these being seriously considered in an age where policy makers and consumers have come to value the contributions of other harm reduction strategies. While the Institute of Medicine (IOM) estimates that Tobacco 21 laws may reduce the number of smokers in the United States by 3 million more people by 2060 than if the status quo in tobacco control is maintained, those estimates do not take into account the contribution of the availability of vapor products to reducing smoking rates. Arguably, given current trends, access to vapor products will contribute to more than 3 million people -- who, otherwise, would likely continue smoking -- quitting over the next 2 years.

I look forward to your response on this issue. I, along with my fellow members of CASAA (Consumer Advocates for Smoke-free Alternatives Association), thank you for considering my

comments and hope you will oppose misguided attempts to limit adult use of low-risk, smoke-free e-cigarettes.

I just want to add that e-cigarette have truly changed my life for the better, & I truly believe they are going to save my life. The vapor is produced with propylene glycol, the same substance that saved my 6 month old infant cousin's life, via a defibrillator for his severe asthma attacks at the time. The carrier for his medication wss propylene glycol. I truly believe in the safety of this substance. It is pumped into hospital AC systems, to keep the air clean, and rock stars have inhaled it every night on tour (from the fog machines) for years without any issues!

I truly believe that e-cigarettes are 1000 times safer than smoking cancerous cigarettes! They WILL save millions of lives over the next decades, due to the fact that in comparison to actual cigarettes, they do not burn 500 chemicals, nor do they produce dangerous chemicals like cigarettes do, rather, the safest e liquid contains 3 substances. Nicotine, propylene glycol, & occasionally, vegetable glycerin.

If I had e cigarettes at age 19 through 20, I may have been able to cut the amount of years I smoked a pack a day or more, down to one year. This is why I do not want to see e cigarettes made illegal to purchase until age 21. I want today's young adults to be able to make the decision to STOP SMOKING & rather, switch to vaping, so that we can save more lives! It's the educated, intelligent populace that are learning of and using e cigarettes, & kicking cigarettes to the curb... But we need to make them available to everyone, including tying adults in poorer neighborhoods! If we change the buying age to 21, we create an enticing black market for tying adults to get trapped within, & I believe it will be easier to buy cigarettes on this black market, than it will be to buy electronic cigarettes. We need to educate our young adults & make SAFER tobacco/nicotine alternatives easy to find& purchase, especially in low income areas!

I am simply talking about SAVING LIVES. Saving human lives. So please consider what I've said here. Please, do not support a bill that will add years of smoking to our young adult's lives, while simultaneously taking years OFF of their lives. Please stand with me & deny bill SB290. Thank you so much for your previous, valuable time. I really do appreciate it. Thank you, so much..

Sincerely,
Joseph Varano